

Europeans take 46 % of their holidays in the third quarter of the year

A look at the seasonal bias in tourism demand in 2009

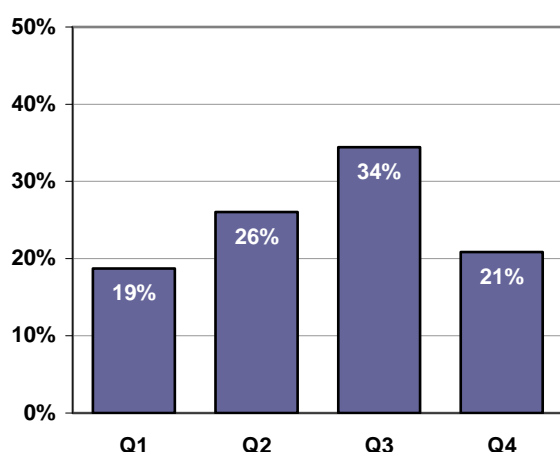
The seasonal distribution of demand for tourism is one of the challenges and opportunities facing the European tourism industry. Extending the tourism season or spreading tourism activities more evenly throughout the year can significantly boost the sustainability and competitiveness of European tourist destinations.

This publication focuses on the seasonal pattern of tourism demand, participation in tourism by EU residents, the trips they made and the number of nights spent on those trips. Tourism demand includes all trips made, regardless of whether they were spent in tourist accommodation (such as hotels or campsites) or in less formal and often unpaid types of accommodation (such as owned

dwelling or accommodation provided for free by friends or relatives). The analysis from the point of view of the demand side complements *Statistics in Focus 53/2010* in which the seasonal bias in the tourist accommodation sector is discussed.

In 2009, tourism demand was concentrated in the third quarter, with more than one in three holiday trips made in July, August or September. When taking into account the duration of the trips, the seasonal pattern was even more pronounced, with EU residents spending 46 % of all nights away on holiday in the third quarter of 2009. Short holiday trips, domestic holidays and business trips tended to smoothen the seasonality of tourism demand. The increasing popularity of short trips slightly reduced the seasonal bias in the period 2004-2009.

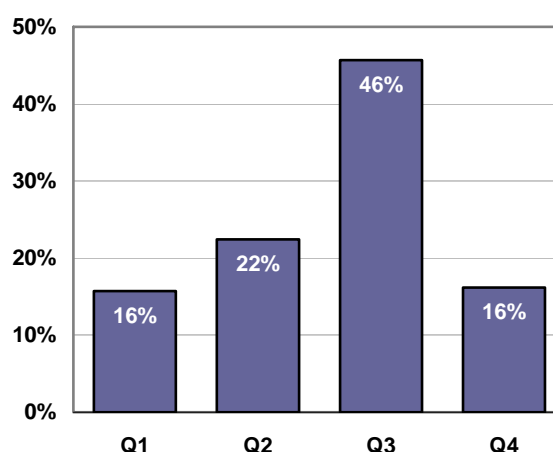
Figure 1a: Distribution of holiday trips in the four quarters of 2009 [sum=100%], EU-27



Note: Not including MT.

Source: Eurostat (tour_dem_ttmq)

Figure 1b: Distribution of nights spent in the four quarters of 2009 [sum=100%], EU-27



Note: Not including MT.

Source: Eurostat (tour_dem_tnmq)

Almost half of the EU population went on holiday in the 3rd quarter of 2009

During the third quarter of 2009, nearly half (48 %) of all EU residents went on holiday at least once with at least one overnight stay (see Table 1).

During the other three quarters of the year, far fewer EU residents went on holiday, ranging from around one in four to one in three persons. In all

countries, the period July-September was the most popular time to go on holiday. The biggest infra-annual variation was observed in Cyprus, where 83 % of the population went on holiday in the third quarter of 2009 and only 16 % or less travelled at other times of the year.

Table 1: Share of the resident population (aged 15 or over) who went on holiday at least once during the reference quarter of 2009, broken down by duration of trip.

	Share of the population having made at least 1 holiday trip of at least 1 overnight stay (in percentage)				Share of the population having made at least 1 holiday trip of at least 4 overnight stays (in percentage)			
	1st quarter	2nd quarter	3rd quarter	4th quarter	1st quarter	2nd quarter	3rd quarter	4th quarter
EU-27	26%	35%	48%	29%	13%	19%	35%	13%
BE	16%	24%	39%	15%	10%	17%	34%	9%
BG	12%	12%	23%	13%	4%	6%	18%	5%
CZ	31%	41%	53%	16%	12%	17%	40%	6%
DK	34%	42%	58%	30%	23%	28%	48%	18%
DE	41%	51%	60%	48%	16%	24%	36%	18%
EE	18%	22%	31%	18%	7%	10%	14%	8%
IE	46%	50%	59%	49%	23%	33%	44%	24%
EL	11%	20%	43%	16%	5%	14%	39%	10%
ES	21%	28%	40%	22%	8%	14%	31%	9%
FR	36%	50%	63%	36%	22%	31%	53%	20%
IT	18%	24%	45%	17%	9%	12%	39%	8%
CY	12%	16%	83%	15%	11%	14%	50%	14%
LV	15%	23%	29%	16%	4%	5%	7%	3%
LT	19%	23%	34%	20%	5%	7%	14%	8%
LU	46%	55%	72%	49%	25%	31%	48%	26%
HU	17%	23%	31%	20%	3%	6%	13%	4%
MT	:	:	:	:	:	:	:	:
NL	28%	44%	57%	35%	17%	33%	50%	21%
AT	30%	39%	58%	32%	18%	26%	46%	16%
PL	12%	16%	30%	13%	6%	8%	23%	6%
PT	12%	15%	27%	14%	5%	6%	20%	6%
RO	12%	13%	20%	13%	4%	5%	14%	6%
SI	21%	29%	54%	22%	10%	15%	44%	8%
SK	23%	29%	43%	23%	17%	22%	35%	14%
FI	56%	63%	70%	58%	24%	29%	39%	22%
SE	60%	80%	89%	75%	26%	37%	50%	29%
UK	24%	34%	47%	33%	12%	20%	32%	17%
NO	42%	53%	70%	43%	19%	34%	58%	22%
HR	17%	22%	35%	21%	7%	12%	27%	11%

Notes: EU-27 : Not including MT. IE, EL and FR: 4th quarter based on estimated values. DK and IT: 2007 data. PT: 2006 data.

Source: Eurostat ([tour_dem_ttmtd](#), [demo_pianguroup](#))

When looking at holidays of at least 4 nights, the share of the population that travelled during the third quarter (35 %) was almost double that during

the second quarter (19 %). During the first and fourth quarter of 2009, only 13 % of the population went on holiday for at least 4 nights.

More than one in three holidays took place during the third quarter. In terms of nights spent away, 46 % were in the third quarter of 2009, with an even stronger bias for long trips.

While the previous section focused on participation in tourism, i.e. the share of the population that went on holiday at least once during the reference quarter, this section takes a closer look at the time people spend on holiday and the number of nights they spent away.

The number of trips made by EU residents in the first and the last quarter of 2009 were both around 20 % of the total number of annual trips (see Figure 1a and the left part of Table 2). With some differences, this conclusion holds for all Member States. Only in Cyprus did the first and last quarter account for less than 10 % of trips. In the second quarter — largely overlapping with the spring and in many countries with Easter — a slightly higher number of trips was recorded compared to the first and last quarter. On average across the EU, 26 % of holidays were taken in this quarter. Unsurprisingly, the third quarter was the most popular period for going on holiday. More than one in three (34 %) holiday trips in 2009 was made in July, August or September. When looking at the highest average absolute difference between the four quarterly figures and the average over the quarters, the strongest seasonal pattern in tourism demand was observed in Cyprus, where 70 % of all holiday trips were made in the third quarter. This quarter was also particularly popular for Greek and Slovenian tourists (both 45 %) and for Italian and Bulgarian tourists (both 43 %). The least pronounced seasonal pattern was recorded for German tourists, who showed the most equal spread over the four quarters of the year: 21 %, 25 %, 29 % and 25 %.

Residents of Ireland, Sweden, Finland and Spain also tended to spread their holiday trips over the year more evenly.

An analysis of the seasonal pattern of the number of nights spent on holiday — in other words the length of trips — shows a similar but more pronounced distribution (see Figure 1b and the right part of Table 2). While 34 % of all trips were made in the third quarter, the number of nights spent on holiday in the third quarter accounted for 46 % of the total in 2009. This means a longer average duration of trips (see Table 3). The average trip made in the first, second and fourth quarter lasted 4 to 5 days (nights), in the third quarter this rose to slightly over a week (7.4 overnight stays for holidays taken by EU residents).

Only one Member State recorded more than half of its holiday trips during the third quarter (Cyprus, 70 %), but residents of eight Member States spent more than half of their holiday *nights* away during the third quarter. The highest seasonal peak in terms of the third quarter's share in nights spent on holiday was observed in Greece (67 %), Italy (63 %) and Slovenia (59 %). Again, the seasonal pattern was less pronounced in the quarterly number of nights spent away by German, Swedish and Finnish tourists. Unsurprisingly, the latter two countries also recorded the highest number of holiday trips per person (7 trips per year in Finland, 5 trips per year in Sweden). In other words, and as one could expect, more trips per person resulted in a more even spread of the trips throughout the year.

Table 2: Number of trips and nights spent away by EU residents in 2009, broken down by quarter

	Trips of at least 1 overnight stay					Tourism nights				
	Number of trips in 2009 (in '000)	Distribution per quarter				Number of nights in 2009 (in '000)	Distribution per quarter			
		Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4		Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4
EU-27	1 035 355	19%	26%	34%	21%	5 731 358	16%	22%	46%	16%
BE	11 331	17%	25%	42%	16%	84 791	12%	22%	54%	12%
BG	7 861	19%	20%	43%	17%	35 301	15%	19%	51%	15%
CZ	26 379	18%	26%	39%	17%	119 587	14%	22%	51%	13%
DK	10 368	21%	26%	34%	20%	62 536	19%	22%	43%	16%
DE	224 496	21%	25%	29%	25%	1 197 016	17%	25%	38%	21%
EE	1 392	22%	24%	37%	18%	6 569	16%	25%	42%	17%
IE	10 703	21%	25%	31%	23%	57 194	18%	26%	37%	19%
EL	13 504	16%	22%	45%	17%	100 765	7%	16%	67%	11%
ES	122 167	20%	26%	32%	22%	586 773	16%	19%	48%	17%
FR	201 439	18%	28%	35%	20%	1 148 234	15%	22%	49%	14%
IT	80 183	18%	23%	43%	17%	515 385	14%	14%	63%	9%
CY	1 782	9%	12%	70%	10%	11 938	16%	17%	53%	14%
LV	4 152	17%	29%	37%	17%	14 452	17%	29%	37%	17%
LT	3 219	19%	24%	36%	21%	12 888	16%	22%	38%	23%
LU	1 370	21%	24%	34%	21%	9 203	18%	20%	44%	18%
HU	18 521	19%	26%	34%	21%	72 327	17%	25%	41%	18%
MT	:	:	:	:	:	:	:	:	:	:
NL	29 669	15%	30%	35%	20%	226 210	12%	28%	45%	15%
AT	17 196	17%	25%	39%	19%	96 667	16%	23%	47%	15%
PL	31 634	17%	23%	42%	17%	183 488	13%	21%	51%	15%
PT	10 265	21%	25%	35%	19%	52 327	15%	18%	52%	15%
RO	12 164	22%	23%	34%	21%	56 029	16%	21%	44%	19%
SI	4 332	16%	23%	45%	16%	19 383	14%	17%	59%	11%
SK	6 062	20%	23%	38%	19%	41 061	17%	26%	42%	15%
FI	30 201	20%	28%	31%	21%	101 984	20%	27%	35%	18%
SE	36 474	18%	26%	32%	24%	153 579	18%	26%	36%	20%
UK	118 493	16%	28%	35%	21%	765 672	17%	26%	39%	18%
NO	16 830	21%	26%	35%	18%	84 530	16%	24%	44%	15%
HR	6 912	17%	23%	37%	22%	35 119	13%	19%	49%	19%

Notes: EU-27: Not including MT. IE, EL and FR: 4th quarter based on estimated values. DK and IT: 2007 data. PT: 2006 data.

Source: Eurostat ([tour_dem_tmmd](#), [tour_dem_tnmd](#))

When looking at the breakdown by duration of trips (see Figures 2 and Table 4), short trips of 1 to 3 overnight stays were distributed more evenly over the year compared to longer trips of at least 4 overnight stays. Contrary to the general conclusions above, the second quarter was the most popular for taking short trips (28% of all short holiday trips on average for the EU, compared to 27% for the third quarter).

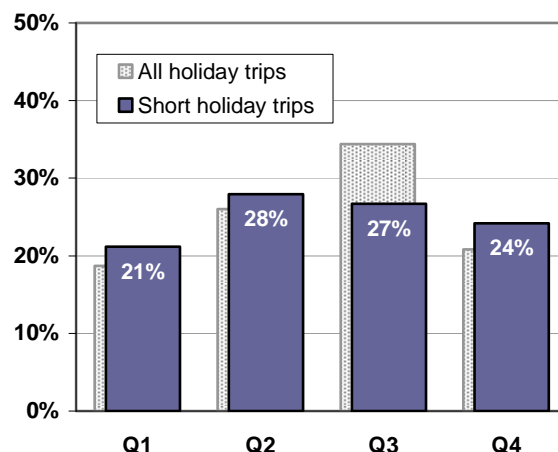
Table 3: Average length of holiday trips, per quarter, 2009

	Trips of at least 1 overnight stay				
	Year	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4
EU-27	5.5	4.6	4.8	7.4	4.3
BE	7.5	5.4	6.7	9.5	5.6
BG	4.5	3.4	4.1	5.4	4.0
CZ	4.5	3.4	3.8	6.0	3.5
DK	6.0	5.4	5.3	7.5	5.1
DE	5.3	4.4	5.2	6.8	4.4
EE	4.7	3.5	5.1	5.4	4.4
IE	5.3	4.5	5.7	6.5	4.3
EL	7.5	3.1	5.2	11.2	4.6
ES	4.8	3.8	3.5	7.3	3.7
FR	5.7	4.8	4.6	8.0	4.1
IT	6.4	4.9	4.0	9.4	3.6
CY	6.7	12.3	9.9	5.1	9.6
LV	3.5	3.5	3.5	3.5	3.6
LT	4.0	3.3	3.7	4.3	4.5
LU	6.7	5.7	5.7	8.7	5.7
HU	3.9	3.4	3.7	4.7	3.4
MT	:	:	:	:	:
NL	7.6	5.8	7.2	9.9	5.7
AT	5.6	5.1	5.2	6.7	4.5
PL	5.8	4.4	5.4	7.0	4.9
PT	5.1	3.6	3.7	7.6	3.9
RO	4.6	3.5	4.1	6.0	4.2
SI	4.5	3.7	3.3	5.8	3.1
SK	6.8	5.7	7.7	7.4	5.4
FI	3.4	3.4	3.3	3.8	2.8
SE	4.2	4.4	4.2	4.7	3.5
UK	6.5	6.9	6.0	7.2	5.6
NO	5.0	3.9	4.6	6.4	4.3
HR	5.1	3.8	4.0	6.7	4.4

Notes: EU-27: Not including MT. IE, EL and FR: 4th quarter based on estimated values. DK and IT: 2007 data. PT: 2006 data.

Source: Eurostat ([tour_dem_ttmtd](#), [tour_dem_tmtd](#))

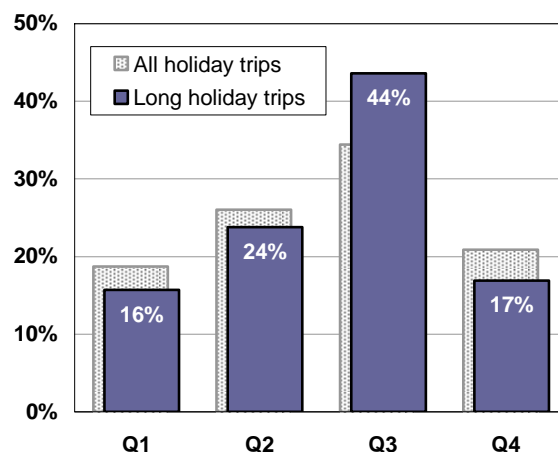
Figure 2a: Distribution of short holiday trips in the four quarters of 2009 [sum=100%], EU-27



Note: EU-27: Not including MT and RO.

Source: Eurostat ([tour_dem_ttmtd](#))

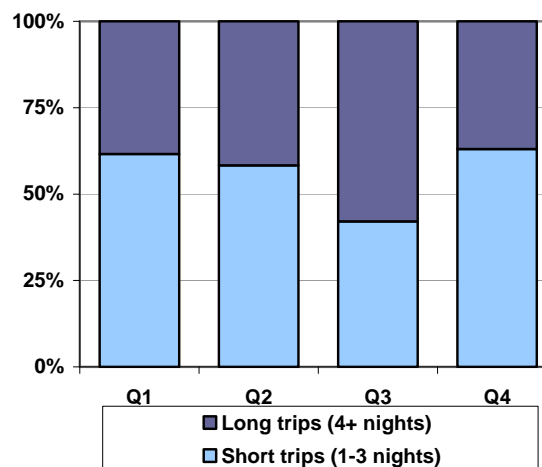
Figure 2b: Distribution of long holiday trips in the four quarters of 2009 [sum=100%], EU-27



Note: EU-27: Not including MT and RO.

Source: Eurostat ([tour_dem_ttmtd](#))

Figure 2c: Share of short and long holiday trips, by quarter, 2009, EU-27



Note: EU-27: Not including MT and RO.

Source: Eurostat ([tour_dem_ttmtd](#))

In 9 Member States, short holiday trips in "spring" outnumbered short trips in the main summer season. French, Dutch and Portuguese tourists made more than 30 % of their short holiday trips in the second quarter. Again, Cyprus showed the strongest seasonal bias with 85 % of short trips taken in July, August and September. However, for long holiday trips, 44 % of the annual number of

long trips made by EU residents was taken in the third quarter, by far the preferred season for making long trips. In all countries, the third quarter was the top season for going on holiday. In 8 EU Member States, at least half of long holiday trips were taken in the third quarter, rising to 60% or more in Greece and Slovenia.

Table 4: Holiday trips made by the resident population in 2009, broken down by length of stay and distribution per quarter

	Short trips of 1 to 3 overnight stays					Long trips of 4 and more overnight stays				
	Number of short trips (in '000)	Distribution per quarter				Number of long trips (in '000)	Distribution per quarter			
		Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4		Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4
EU-27	556 076	21%	28%	27%	24%	467 116	16%	24%	44%	17%
BE	4 213	23%	27%	28%	22%	7 119	14%	24%	50%	12%
BG	4 868	25%	21%	33%	21%	2 993	10%	20%	58%	12%
CZ	15 926	21%	31%	28%	20%	10 453	15%	18%	55%	12%
DK	4 377	23%	28%	25%	24%	5 991	19%	24%	41%	16%
DE	118 589	24%	26%	23%	28%	105 907	17%	25%	37%	21%
EE	907	24%	22%	37%	16%	485	17%	26%	36%	21%
IE	5 634	25%	23%	25%	27%	5 069	18%	26%	37%	19%
EL	5 838	28%	26%	24%	22%	7 666	6%	20%	60%	14%
ES	82 600	22%	28%	26%	24%	39 567	16%	23%	44%	18%
FR	105 986	19%	31%	27%	23%	95 453	17%	24%	43%	16%
IT	39 846	22%	29%	26%	23%	40 336	13%	16%	59%	11%
CY	885	4%	6%	85%	5%	897	14%	17%	54%	15%
LV	3 320	17%	29%	37%	17%	832	18%	30%	35%	17%
LT	2 158	23%	26%	33%	19%	1 061	13%	20%	43%	24%
LU	549	23%	25%	27%	24%	820	19%	23%	39%	19%
HU	12 461	22%	27%	28%	23%	6 060	14%	24%	46%	16%
MT	:	:	:	:	:	:	:	:	:	:
NL	10 691	20%	32%	23%	25%	18 978	13%	29%	42%	17%
AT	7 912	18%	25%	32%	24%	9 284	16%	24%	45%	15%
PL	15 613	21%	26%	32%	20%	16 021	14%	19%	53%	15%
PT	6 423	26%	30%	23%	21%	3 842	12%	18%	54%	16%
RO	:	:	:	:	:	:	:	:	:	:
SI	2 634	20%	26%	35%	20%	1 698	11%	18%	62%	9%
SK	1 715	24%	22%	26%	28%	4 347	19%	24%	43%	15%
FI	23 016	20%	28%	29%	22%	7 185	21%	25%	36%	17%
SE	24 081	18%	26%	29%	27%	12 393	17%	26%	37%	20%
UK	55 835	18%	28%	30%	24%	62 657	15%	28%	39%	18%
NO	9 980	26%	26%	29%	20%	6 850	13%	27%	45%	15%
HR	3 577	21%	26%	28%	25%	3 335	13%	20%	47%	19%

Notes: EU-27: Not including MT and RO. IE, EL and FR: 4th quarter based on estimated values. DK and IT: 2007 data. PT: 2006 data.

Source: Eurostat ([tour_dem_ttm4](#))

Only in the third quarter, the share of trips abroad exceeded 25 % of the total.

In 2009, EU residents made over 790 000 holiday trips in their own Member States (domestic holiday trips) and nearly 245 000 holiday trips abroad (see Table 5). The spread of domestic and trips abroad over the four quarters of the year is relatively comparable, with a slightly stronger seasonal pattern for trips abroad (see Figures 3a and 3b). The number of domestic holidays taken during the peak quarter (the third quarter) exceeded the number taken in the trough quarter (the first quarter) by 78 % and the number of holiday trips abroad more than doubled in the peak quarter compared to the trough quarter.

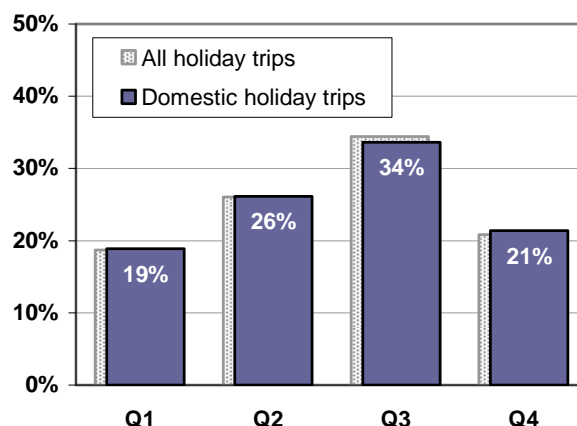
On average over the year, holidays abroad accounted for 23.7 % of all holiday trips. At quarterly level, the share exceeded 25 % only in the third quarter (see Figure 3c).

People tended to take longer holidays during the third quarter (see also Table 3), due most likely to periods of annual leave or school holidays. Given the fixed costs of transportation, it is unsurprising that the season during which trips were the longest is also the most popular season for going on trips abroad.

Holiday patterns in Europe differed widely in 2009. In a number of countries, the number of trips during the peak season was more than twice the number of trips in the trough quarter, both for domestic and foreign trips. This was the case in Greece, Italy, the Netherlands and Poland. In other countries, such as Ireland, Finland, Sweden and (to a lesser extent) Germany, the seasonal bias was relatively small for both types of destination.

In a group of countries, the seasonal pattern for domestic trips was low compared to other countries but there were strong seasonal fluctuations for trips abroad made by residents. This was especially so in Romania, Slovenia and Slovakia, but also in the Czech Republic and Austria, the difference between the third and the first quarter was twice as high for trips abroad than for domestic trips. The opposite happened in Estonia and Croatia, where the pattern of holidays abroad was relatively evenly spread across the year but fluctuated more for domestic holiday trips.

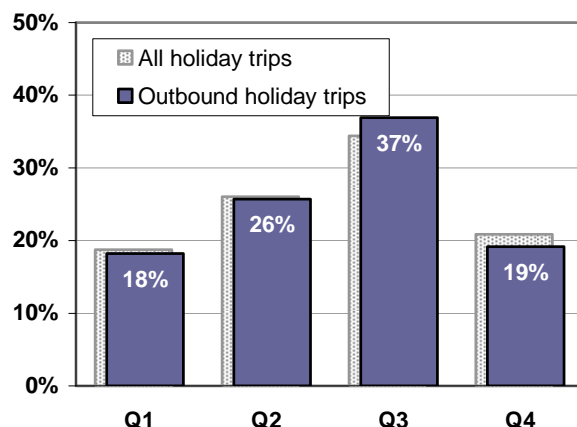
Figure 3a: Distribution of domestic holiday trips in the four quarters of 2009 [sum=100%], EU-27



Note: EU-27: Not including MT and RO.

Source: Eurostat (tour_dem_tmtd)

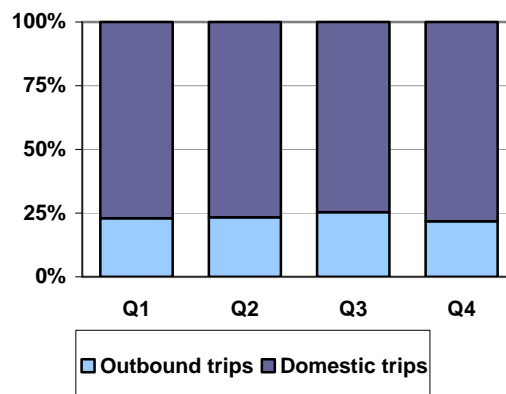
Figure 3b: Distribution of holiday trips abroad in the four quarters of 2009 [sum=100%], EU-27



Note: EU-27: Not including MT and RO.

Source: Eurostat (tour_dem_tmtd)

Figure 3c: Share of domestic and outbound holiday trips, by quarter, 2009, EU-27



Note: EU-27: Not including MT and RO.

Source: Eurostat (tour_dem_tmtd)

The data do not show a link between the importance of tourism abroad and seasonality of this type of holiday. For nearly all countries where trips abroad accounted for 10 % or less of the total number of holiday trips made in 2009 (Bulgaria, Greece, Spain, France, Portugal and Romania) the

seasonal pattern of trips abroad did not differ much from the EU average. The only exception was Romania, where half of all holiday trips abroad were made during the third quarter (the second highest figure in the EU, after Slovenia).

Table 5: Holiday trips made by the resident population in 2009, broken down by destination and distribution per quarter

	Domestic trips					Outbound trips				
	Number of domestic trips (in '000)	Distribution per quarter				Number of outbound trips (in '000)	Distribution per quarter			
		Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4		Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4
EU-27	790 352	19%	26%	34%	21%	244 961	18%	26%	37%	19%
BE	3 076	20%	26%	37%	17%	8 255	16%	25%	44%	15%
BG	7 101	19%	19%	44%	18%	760	20%	30%	34%	16%
CZ	20 514	20%	27%	35%	18%	5 865	14%	23%	53%	11%
DK	4 944	20%	27%	34%	19%	5 424	22%	24%	34%	20%
DE	152 172	21%	25%	27%	27%	72 323	20%	25%	36%	20%
EE	788	23%	22%	40%	15%	604	20%	25%	33%	22%
IE	5 481	21%	24%	31%	25%	5 232	22%	26%	31%	22%
EL	12 421	16%	23%	46%	16%	1 033	15%	20%	31%	34%
ES	113 783	20%	27%	31%	22%	8 384	19%	21%	39%	21%
FR	180 573	18%	27%	35%	20%	20 863	16%	30%	35%	20%
IT	66 023	17%	23%	43%	17%	14 160	19%	20%	44%	17%
CY	997	1%	4%	94%	2%	785	19%	22%	39%	20%
LV	3 343	17%	30%	37%	15%	810	19%	25%	33%	23%
LT	2 164	21%	23%	36%	21%	1 055	17%	26%	36%	21%
LU	8	24%	14%	26%	36%	1 362	21%	24%	34%	21%
HU	14 618	19%	27%	34%	21%	3 903	21%	24%	36%	19%
MT	:	:	:	:	:	:	:	:	:	:
NL	14 164	14%	32%	33%	20%	15 504	16%	28%	36%	20%
AT	9 018	22%	21%	36%	21%	8 178	12%	28%	43%	16%
PL	27 061	18%	22%	43%	18%	4 573	15%	27%	42%	16%
PT	9 244	21%	25%	35%	19%	1 021	18%	22%	37%	24%
RO	11 361	22%	24%	33%	21%	802	15%	17%	50%	18%
SI	2 230	21%	24%	36%	19%	2 102	12%	21%	55%	12%
SK	3 426	25%	22%	32%	21%	2 636	14%	24%	46%	16%
FI	25 242	20%	28%	31%	21%	4 959	21%	27%	27%	24%
SE	27 873	17%	26%	33%	24%	8 602	19%	27%	30%	24%
UK	72 726	15%	29%	35%	22%	45 767	19%	27%	35%	19%
NO	11 310	22%	27%	34%	17%	5 510	18%	26%	37%	19%
HR	4 860	16%	24%	42%	19%	2 052	21%	23%	27%	30%

Notes: EU-27: Not including MT and RO. IE, EL and FR: 4th quarter based on estimated values. DK and IT: 2007 data. PT: 2006 data.

Source: Eurostat ([tour_dem_ttmtd](#))

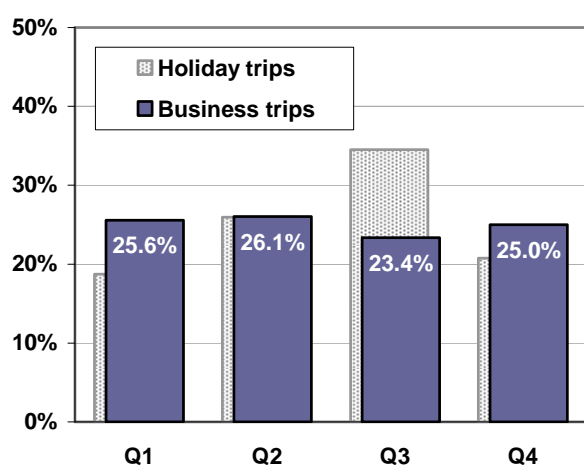
Business trips showed a less pronounced seasonal pattern and tended to partly compensate for the peak and trough periods

Although reliable statistics on business trips broken down by quarter are not available for all Member States, Figures 4a and 4b give an illustration at aggregate level of the 27 Member States of the European Union. Business trips were spread more evenly over the year than holiday trips, with a seasonal variation ranging from just over 43 million business trips in the third quarter, or 23 % of the annual total, to just under 48 million business trips in the second quarter, or 26 % of the

annual total (EU 27 data, excluding the Netherlands and Malta).

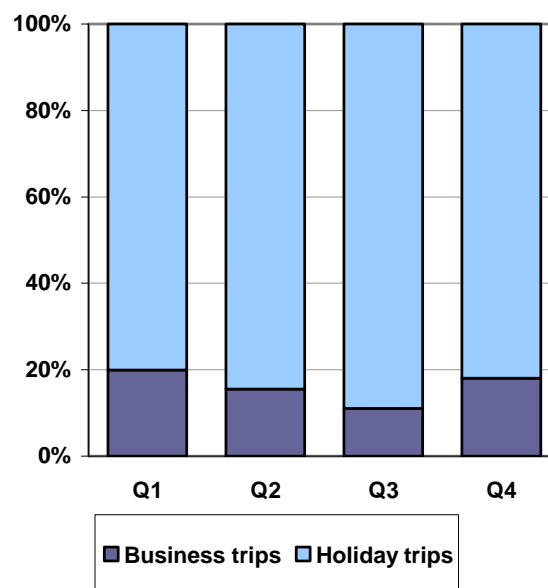
On average over the year, business trips represented around 15 % of all trips made by EU residents. As shown in Figure 3b, this figure ranged from around 20 % in the first and last quarter of the year to 11 % in the main holiday period, the third quarter.

Figure 4a: Distribution of business trips in 2009 [sum=100%], EU-27



Note: EU-27 estimate not including NL and MT.
Source: Eurostat ([tour_dem_tmd](#))

Figure 4b: Share of holiday and business trips, by quarter, 2009, EU-27



Note: EU-27 estimate not including NL and MT.
Source: Eurostat ([tour_dem_tmd](#))

In the period 2004-2009, the seasonality of demand for tourism by EU residents fell slightly

Based on data available on 21 Member States for 2004 and 2009, this section takes a look at the trend in recent years of the seasonal bias in tourism demand for non-professional purpose. Although the period spans only six reference years, some patterns do emerge.

In all four quarters, both the number of holiday trips and the number of nights spent away increased in 2009 compared to the same quarter in 2004 (see Figures 5a and 6a).

However, two important trends are noticeable.

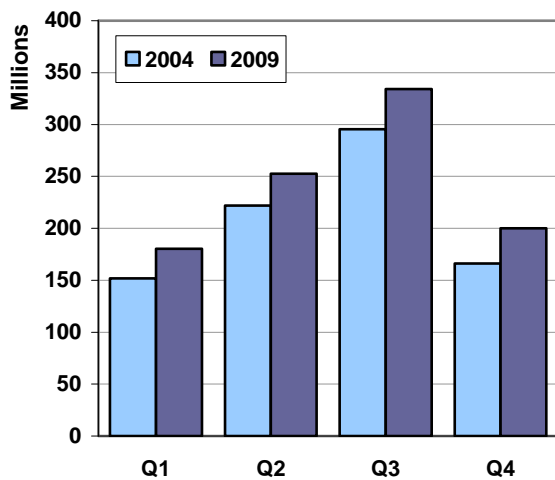
Firstly, the number of trips increased at a faster pace than the number of nights away, leading to a

shorter average length of trip. This phenomenon is apparent all year round.

Secondly, the increases were significantly higher during the traditional low season compared to the peak season. In the first and fourth quarter, the number of trips increased by 19 % and 21 % between 2004 and 2009, while in the second and third quarter the increase was 14 % and 13 %. A broadly similar pattern was observed in the increase in nights spent away during the same quarter in this period, with an increase of 14 %, 10 %, 3 % and 7 % in the first, second, third and fourth quarter.

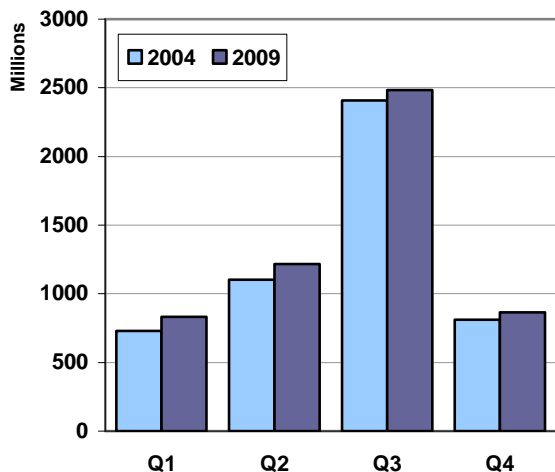
Between 2004 and 2009, Europeans slightly changed their tourism behaviour and tended to take additional holidays during the traditional low season rather than in the peak season. Given the reduction in the average length of trips, these additional trips tended to be shorter. The statistics on participation in tourism (not shown in the Figures) also indicated an increase between 2004 and 2009 in the number of persons who went on holiday at least once in the first or the fourth quarter, compared to the second or third quarter.

Figure 5a: Number of holiday trips per quarter, 2004 and 2009, EU-27



EU-27 estimate not including BG, DK, LV, MT, PT and SE.
Source: Eurostat ([tour_dem_tmd](#))

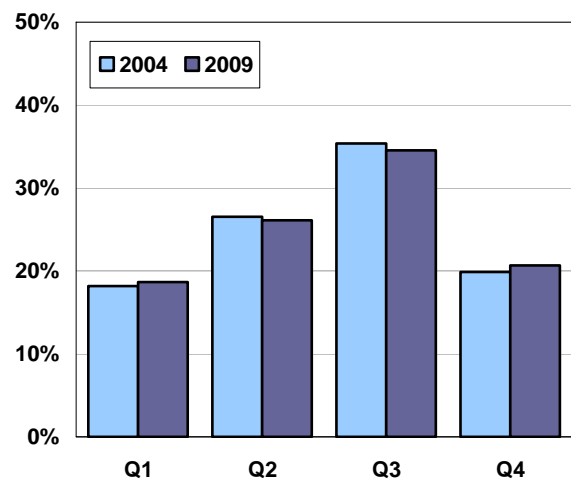
Figure 6a: Number of nights spent away per quarter, 2004 and 2009, EU-27



EU-27 estimate not including BG, DK, LV, MT, PT and SE.
Source: Eurostat ([tour_dem_tmd](#))

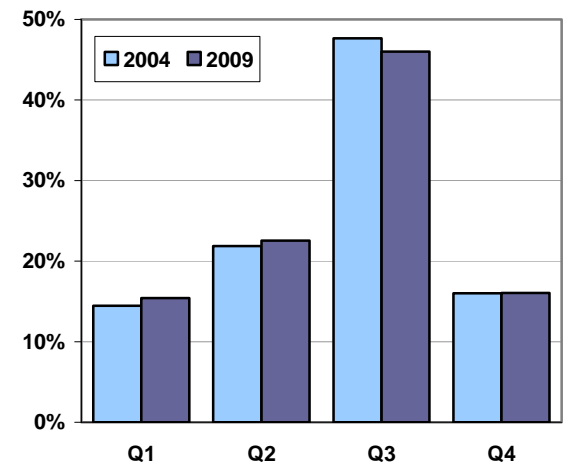
The relatively stronger demand for tourism during the low season (first and fourth quarter) led to a reduction in seasonal variation, as shown in the quarterly distribution of holiday trips and nights in Figures 5b and 6b. The share of the first quarter in the total number of holiday trips increased by 0.5 percentage points between 2004 and 2009 while the share of the third quarter dropped by 0.8 percentage points. The number of nights spent away increased by 0.9 percentage points in the first quarter and fell by 1.7 percentage points in the third quarter.

Figure 5b: Distribution of holiday trips per quarter, 2004 and 2009 [sum of four quarters in each year = 100%], EU-27



EU-27 estimate not including BG, DK, LV, MT, PT and SE.
Source: Eurostat ([tour_dem_tmd](#))

Figure 6b: Distribution of nights spent away per quarter, 2004 and 2009 [sum of four quarters in each year = 100%], EU-27



EU-27 estimate not including BG, DK, LV, MT, PT and SE.
Source: Eurostat ([tour_dem_tmd](#))

METHODOLOGICAL NOTES

Country codes

Aggregates:

EU-27: European Union

EU Member States

BG: Bulgaria

BE: Belgium

CZ: Czech Republic

DK: Denmark

DE: Germany

EE: Estonia

IE: Ireland

EL: Greece

ES: Spain

FR: France

IT: Italy

CY: Cyprus

LV: Latvia

LT: Lithuania

LU: Luxembourg

HU: Hungary

MT: Malta

NL: Netherlands

AT: Austria

PL: Poland

PT: Portugal

RO: Romania

SI: Slovenia

SK: Slovakia

FI: Finland

SE: Sweden

UK: United

Kingdom

EFTA/EEA

CH: Switzerland

LI: Liechtenstein

NO: Norway

Candidate countries

HR: Croatia

Symbols

": " data unavailable or unreliable

Concepts and definitions

Tourism refers to the activity of visitors making a trip to a main destination outside their usual environment, for less than a year, for any main purpose, including business, leisure or other personal reasons, other than to take up employment by a resident entity in that place.

Trips, average length of stay

Long trips are trips of at least 4 overnight stays, *short trips* are trips of 1-3 overnight stays.

Average length of stay is calculated by dividing the total number of nights spent away by the total number of trips.

Data on demand for and participation in tourism, holiday trips made and nights spent on those trips applies to the population aged 15 and over.

Data sources

[Council Directive 95/57/EC of 23 November 1995](#) on the collection of statistical information in the field of tourism organises the European Statistical System of tourism statistics. This system consists of two main components: statistics on capacity and occupancy of tourist accommodation and statistics on tourism demand. The former are collected in most Member States via surveys filled in by accommodation establishments, while the latter are mostly collected by means of traveller surveys at the border or via traditional household surveys.

Statistics on the occupancy of tourist accommodation refer to the number of arrivals (at accommodation establishments) and the number of nights spent by residents and non-residents, broken down by type of establishment or by region. Both annual and monthly series are available. Statistics on the use of beds (occupancy rates) are also compiled.

Statistics on the demand for tourism look at participation, i.e. the number of residents that make at least one trip of at least four overnight stays during the reference period (quarter, year). They also look at the number of tourism trips made (and the number of nights spent on those trips), broken down by tourism-related variables such as country of destination, month of departure, length of stay, type of organisation of the trip, mode of transport, type of accommodation or expenditure, and by socio-demographic variables, such as age or gender. Annual and quarterly series are available. This *Statistics in Focus* is based on the data on tourism demand.

Further information

Eurostat Website: <http://ec.europa.eu/eurostat>

Data on "Tourism statistics":

<http://epp.eurostat.ec.europa.eu/portal/page/portal/tourism/data/database>

More information about "Tourism statistics"

<http://epp.eurostat.ec.europa.eu/portal/page/portal/tourism/introduction>

Journalists can contact the media support service:

Bech Building Office A4/125 L - 2920 Luxembourg

Tel. (352) 4301 33408 Fax (352) 4301 35349

E-mail: eurostat-mediasupport@ec.europa.eu

European Statistical Data Support:

With the members of the 'European statistical system', Eurostat has set up a network of support centres in nearly all Member States and in some EFTA countries.

Their mission is to provide help and guidance to Internet users of European statistical data.

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